Fact Sheet

Updates to Storm Water Quality Standards in the City of San Diego Land Development Manual

Land Development Design Requirements – Low Impact Development (LID)

Introduction
The California Regional Water Quality Control Board issues a storm water discharge permit (Permit) to the City of San Diego. The Permit is under the auspices of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The overall goal of the Permit is to reduce the amount of pollutants carried by storm water runoff that enter the City's storm water system. San Diego's storm water system is a combination of pipes and channels that carry runoff to streams, bays, and the Pacific Ocean. Storm water does not go to a final treatment facility before entering these waterways and the ocean.

Why is the Land Development Manual being updated?
The City is in the process of updating its Land Development Manual (Manual) to be consistent with revisions made to the Permit in January 2007. The Manual includes requirements and guidelines for how new construction must be managed and also what measures must be in place at a structure or facility after construction is completed for long term reduction of storm water pollution at the site. Public input is important and valued so that the City can consider viewpoints and ideas on the updates to achieve the goal of reducing storm water pollution and compliance with Permit requirements. **Low impact development** is a Permit requirement.

What is Low Impact Development?
Low impact development, called LID, is a way to design a land development project so that it creates opportunities for water to soak (infiltrate) into the ground when it rains, instead of running off into the street and storm drain system. This creates a "low impact" on the storm drain system. There are a wide range of permanent design features that could be included in a project to achieve low impact development. Often these measures appear natural or ordinary; when in fact, they have special features to capture rainfall and reduce storm water runoff. Some examples of low impact development features are:

- strips of vegetation with underground drainage next to a paved or hard surface
- porous pavement that allows rain to soak through underground

Why is it considered a method to reduce storm water pollution in developments?
LID controls runoff at the source. When rain water runs off a property and into the storm drain system, it picks up particles and pollutants that may be on the ground around the structure, or on the parking lot, road, or other surface. By keeping rain water on site and allowing it to soak into the ground, any pollutants or particles in the runoff can't enter the storm drain system.

References
Regional Water Quality Control Board Storm Water Discharge Permit for the City of San Diego
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/programs/sd_stormwater.html

City of San Diego Land Development Manual
http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/industry/landdevmanual.shtml

www.ThinkBlue.org (Please see photo on following page.)

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Strip of vegetation with underground drainage adjacent to hard surfaces